City of Seattle

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Department of Planning and Development
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CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number:	2302196
	C.F. #306256
Applicant Name:	Seattle Department of Fleets and Facilities
Address of Proposal:	9401 Meyers Way South

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Council Land Use Action for future construction of a City Facility (Joint Training Facility for SFD, SPU and SDOT). Project includes construction of 34,000 sf of classroom space, 11,246 sf of apparatus storage facility, a high drill tower, a burn tower and other training props. The project also includes 58,000 cu. yds. of grading (cut and fill). Parking for 18 vehicles provided on the site and 82 off site.

The following approvals are required:

Council Concept Approval of a City Facility, a Fire Department and Utility Training Facility (SMC 23.76.036.B)

Council Land Use Action to Require Reduced Amount of Parking (code required 122, proposed 38 on site) (SMC Section 23.76.034.B, and 23.54.015)

SEPA - Environmental Determination - SMC Section 25.05

SEPA DETERMINATION: [ ] Exempt [ ] DNS [ ] EIS

[X] DNS with conditions

[ ] DNS involving non exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction

BACKGROUND DATA

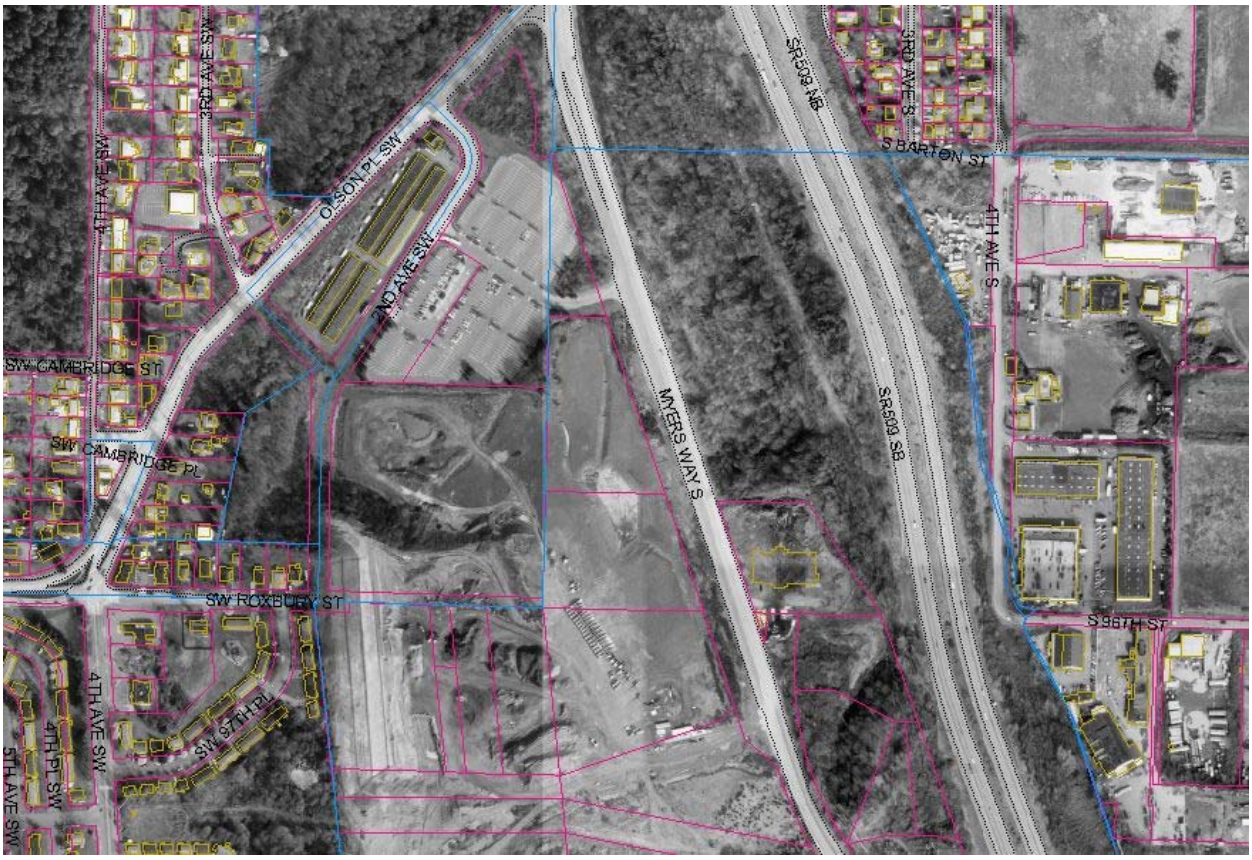
Site and Vicinity Description

The proposal site is a 12.6 acre parcel of land recently acquired by the City of Seattle. A 2.5 acre portion of the site has been used for surface parking as part of a Metro/King County Park

and Ride lot. This facility has had excess capacity since its creation and the subject portion has been sold to the City. The remainder of the site is undeveloped. All of it was once mined for sand and filled with other earth material, graded and improved with drainage swales a retention pond, and riparian element intended to become a portion of Hamm Creek.

The site is bordered by a remaining portion of the quarry to the south, King County subsidized housing on a high near-cliff to the west, and existing Metro Park and Ride lot and Hamm Creek to the north, and a two-lane arterial (Meyers Way S.) the east.

Springs have been channeled into a man-made collection swale and are now present at the base of an engineered slope along the western site boundary. This channeled swale begins at the southwestern corner of the site and flows, above ground, northward approximately 220 ft. then enters an underground 500-foot long, 24" diameter tightline. The tightline, combined with another previously constructed drainage swale, is connected to an underground concrete collection vault. An underground outlet travels north from this structure approximately 15 ft. and becomes the day-lit portion identified as Hamm Creek, a Class "A" riparian corridor. Past grading and mining operations at this site removed 60-80 vertical feet of material. The waterways, channels, and piping were altered and reinstalled where they would least impinge mining operations. Historical photos suggest that the above ground portion of Hamm Creek on the site was daylighted sometime within the last 25 years.



Past grading activities have altered the original course of Hamm Creek that flows across the northern portion of the site. The headwaters for Hamm Creek are located along the base of the slope on the west side of the site. A terraced, engineered slope, approximately 2 Horizontal to 1

Vertical (2H:1V), is located along the southwestern edge of the project site and extends southwards onto the adjacent property. A swale has been constructed along the base of the slope to collect groundwater seepage and surface water. Water collecting in the swale flows into a culvert near the southwest corner of the Park and Ride Lot. The culvert directs the water to the east for about 500 feet, where a catch basin collects the flow from the culvert and also from a second shallow swale that extends to the southwest. The flow from both of these areas is combined at the catch basin. Water collected in the catch basin is then discharged via a short culvert into a channel constructed along the south side of the Park and Ride Lot, becoming the headwater for Hamm Creek.

Groundwater measurements were taken in nine different boring locations on the site on five occasions between June 14, 2002 and August 1, 2002. Groundwater was encountered in all of the explorations, at depths varying from 2.5 to 7 feet below the ground surface during this relatively dry period of the year.

Proposal Description

The City of Seattle, Department of Fleets and Facilities ("FFD") plans to build a new Joint Training Facility (JTF) Campus to provide needed classroom and physical job training for members of the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), and field workers with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). It will be built on a 12.5-acre site located at 9401 Myers Way S., on the northern portion of a disused sand and gravel quarry, west of Myers Way S. and south of Olson Place SW.

The JTF will be designed to meet LEED silver standards for sustainability. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and is a leading-edge system for designing, constructing and certifying the world's greenest and most energy efficient buildings. The project is designed to provide training opportunities for the three departments while minimizing its impact on the site and reducing its anticipated maintenance and operations budgets.

The project will consist of two buildings, a variety of training props, maintenance sheds, small parking area and landscaping. The primary features of the secured campus will include a two-story classroom/administration building, a high-bay apparatus/storage building, a 6-story high drill tower prop, a 2-story burn prop, an EVAP pad, a collapsed building prop, trench digging and rescue props, confined spaces prop, vehicle extrication and foaming area, and an urban road simulation prop.

Detention of stormwater of sufficient capacity to handle a 100 year storm event as defined in the Seattle Stormwater Code is to be provided. A surface detention pond will also provide some water to be used during Fire Department training operations.

Project development also includes clean up and replanting ("restoration") of the segment of Hamm Creek on the site and partial demolition of the existing Metro Park and Ride lot.

Parking for 18 vehicles is to be provided on site. Parking for an additional 82 vehicles is proposed to be provided on the adjacent site to the north of the proposal site through a contractual arrangement with its owners who intend to develop a training site for Painters and Joiners Union ("Painters Union"). The Painters Union site would be used primarily in the evenings and the subject facility would be used primarily during weekday, daytime hours. A waiver of development standards for a City Facility is being sought to authorize this parking arrangement.

Proposed site improvements include:

- A 32,000 sq. ft. classroom/administration building which contains classrooms, offices and work areas, shower and locker rooms, and various support/storage areas.
- A 7200 sq. ft. high-bay fire apparatus/storage building which replicates a non-residential operational fire station to provide training opportunities for SFD recruits.
- A six-story drill prop to provide for staging and fire assault training in multi-story buildings. In addition, the prop can be used for maze training, search-and-rescue, aerial rescue, climbing and rigging, ladder throwing, roof ventilation, and rope training for all three departments
- A 2-story burn prop which is a specialty prop outfitted with natural-gas (only) "fireplaces" that provide live fire training for recruits
- A Emergency Vehicle Accident Prevention (EVAP) area which is a 112,000 sq. ft. paved surface for heavy construction equipment- and fire apparatus- driver training for all departments.
- A collapsed building prop which provides search-and-rescue and hazard deconstruction opportunities.
- Trench digging and rescue props provide opportunities to practice using heavy equipment in digging, shoring, trenching, pipe-laying, backfilling and rescue.
- A confined spaces prop provides a certified course where workers in all three departments can obtain or renew their certification for confined spaces training.
- A vehicle extrication and foam area is an area used to practice training with foam suppressants and removal of victims (dummies) from wrecked cars. This area is designed to capture broken glass and oil residue spilled as a result of the extrication activities and route the foam residue to the sanitary sewer system.
- A sand-throw prop for utility recruit testing.

Public Comments

The code-required SEPA comment period for this project ended on September 10, 2003. No written comments were received.

ANALYSIS – COUNCIL MODIFICATON OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The following analysis is undertaken pursuant to the provisions SMC 23.76.050.

Evaluation of Proposal Based On Criteria and Policies

The Seattle Fleets and Facilities Department proposes to provide on-site parking for 18 vehicles in a situation where the Seattle Land Use Code and projected demand would require approximately 84 additional parking spaces. Rather than further expand the amount of paved parking area on the site FFD proposes to share parking with the Painters Union facility to be constructed on a parcel immediately north of the subject site along Meyers Way S. FFD's objective is to work within limited budget and site size constraints and while maintaining environmentally positive amenities, including a surface detention pond with bio swales leading into it and a healthy riparian corridor element with adequate buffer zones and a preserved source of ground and surface source water.

The City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policies indicates in Policy E1 that City facilities should be designed and operated with environmental sustainability in mind. Policy E6 states:

"E6 Strive to design, constructs, and operates City facilities to limit environmental impacts, such as by incorporating energy efficiency, water conservation, waste minimization, pollution prevention, or resource-efficient materials throughout a facility's life."

As explained above under the project description section, the proposed facility has been carefully conceived to be sustainable, in construction, operation and in minimizing impact on the surrounding environment. The requested reduction in amount of required parking helps the City to construct a facility with a smaller amount of impervious surface and more swale, pond and riparian areas. These allow the facility to provide some elements of wildlife habitat, to protect downstream water quality from pollution created during operation of the facility and to reduce the amount of potable water withdrawn from the City system.

For the reasons enumerated, granting the requested reduction in amount of required on-site parking is consistent with State Environmental Policies and the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The parking plan proposed appears to be one which can work well without causing on-street parking congestion or impairing the utilization of the facility due to lack of adequate parking. The JTF is expected to be almost exclusively a day time use facility. The Painter's Union training facility is expected to be primarily an evening and weekend use facility. Thus, a shared parking arrangement appears feasible.

While the notion of sharing parking with the Painter's Union facility based upon differing hours of operation would be expected to work most of the time, it is conceivable that there would be conflicts if the JTF were needed on a weekend or an evening. As an element of the real estate transactions employed to acquire the proposal site, a larger parcel adjacent to the south owned by the City is to be sold to a private party; most likely for commercial development consistent with the C2-65' zoning in place on both parcels. Added flexibility in meeting parking demands would be provided if a right to park up to 84 vehicles on that site pursuant to a potentially flexible agreement were retained by the City.

In order to better insure flexibility in and adequacy of shared parking arrangements for the JTF it is recommended that any conveyance of the property adjacent and to the south of the JTF site be subject to a right to park up to 84 vehicles generated by activities at the JTF. Such a reserved parking right could be limited so as to exclude certain periods when activities on the site to the south preclude such parking (for instance during holiday shopping at a retail development).

RECOMMENDATION – COUNCIL APPROVAL AND MODIFICATON

DPD recommends the Seattle City Council find the proposed City Facility, the Joint Training Facility, to be necessary for accomplishing an element of the City's public purpose and that it be approved pursuant to Seattle Land Use Code section 23.76. DPD further recommends the proposed modification of development standards be approved so as to require 32 on-site parking spaces, when approximately 122 are required with the condition that rights to 84 parking spaces be maintained on sites both to the north and the south of the JTF site. These parking rights should be tailored by FFD to provide adequate flexibility to both the JTF and the adjoining site operators and should be pursued and maintained on as many adjoining sites as reasonably possible.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this proposal was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated March 31, 2003 and annotated by this Department. The information in this checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant (a traffic report prepared by Transportation Engineering North West, LLC dated January 2003, a noise report prepared by BRC Acoustics dated January 20, 2003, a geotechnical report by PacRim Geotechnical Inc. dated May 10, 2003, a technical memorandum for PacRim Geotechnical dated July 16, 2003 and plan sets on file with the Department), comments from members of the community and from other agencies, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 25.05.660 provides that proposals can be conditioned or denied in order to mitigate environmental impacts. All conditions must be related to impacts identified in the environmental documents, based on adopted policies, be reasonable and capable of being accomplished. This proposal is reviewed under that substantive SEPA authority.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) establishes the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for specific elements of the environment, certain neighborhood plans, and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states in part:

> "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation (subject to some limitations)."

Under certain limitations/circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: temporary increase in noise levels, increased congestion along roadways, increased levels of fugitive dust and fumes, potential increases in sedimentation and turbidity in riparian environments, and displacement of some aquatic and wildlife species. Due to the temporary nature and limited scope of these impacts, they are not considered significant (SMC 25.05.794). Although not significant, these impacts are adverse and, in some cases, mitigation may be warranted.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Seattle Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (erosion control during construction); the Noise Ordinance (construction noise); and State Air Quality Codes administered by the Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Agency (air quality).

Construction Impacts

The proposal site contains many unique features which will make the control and processing of erosion and stormwater runoff particularly challenging. There are steep slopes rimming the western edge with springs of groundwater at their base and elsewhere on the site. Stormwater and ground water leaving the site are known to feed riparian corridors between the site and the Duwamish River. On the site, surface water travels through swales to either an on-site segment of Hamm Creek or to an on-site pond which drains eastward downhill to join riparian courses to the Duwamish.

Control of both the quantities and the quality of water leaving the proposal site during grading, construction and landscaping periods will be very important. The Seattle Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control code provides for the implementation of extensive measures, or best management practices ("BMPs") to mitigate these impacts. The Seattle SEPA Construction Impacts Policy provides conditioning authority is subject to the Overview Policy in that conditioning authority is authorized only when existing City codes or regulations are not adequate for one of several possible reasons (SMC 25.05.665). In this situation, the City Code, judiciously applied, is expected to result in adequate BMPs.

Construction Traffic has a direct route on arterial streets to the 509 freeway with no expected negative traffic impacts expected.

Noise from grading and construction activities are expected to be adequately controlled by the Seattle Noise Ordinance. Although there are some adjacent residential structures, they are at great distance and atop the hillside to the west.

Dust will be properly controlled by following existing Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations.

It is important that water flows into the headwater segment of Hamm Creek, which is on the site, be uninterrupted during the grading and construction phase. This unusual on-site condition is not anticipated by existing codes and must result in a SEPA condition to require existing flows into the Hamm Creek segment on the site be uninterrupted and unchanged in quantity and quality from current levels during the grading and construction phases.

Care too must be taken when dewatering the site for construction not to diminish groundwater flows into Hamm Creek. Information provided to DPD in the form of a Technical Memorandum from PacRim Geotechnical dated July 16, 2003 indicated that dewatering invert elevations of no more than 238 to 239 would need to be maintained to avoid this condition. Drainage to a lower level would risk diverting water which would otherwise reach the creek and help to keep it running year round.

No further conditioning of short term impacts appear warranted.

Long-Term Impacts

Long-term or use related impacts are also anticipated from the proposal and include: increased human activity; increased traffic on surrounding streets; increased noise from human activities; potential increased on-street parking, increased storm water runoff from increased impervious surfaces, altered groundwater levels and flows, increased light spillage from the site, decreased plant and animal habitat and increased odor generation. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because they are minor in scope. Notwithstanding the determination of non-significance, the following impacts merit more detailed discussion.

Traffic

Expected traffic impacts of the proposed project are disclosed in the January 2003 Traffic Impact Assessment ("traffic study") prepared by Transportation Engineering North West, a part of the environmental documentation. Use of the JTF is expected to take place predominantly on weekdays. Daily vehicle trips are expected to be 517 in number, with over 80% of those carpools (more than one occupant in a vehicle). Peak traffic flows for the site would be inbound in the morning and outbound in the evening. At lunch a smaller peak involving 111 vehicles trips is expected. Peak hour trips are predicted to be 130 in both the a.m. and the p.m. peak hours for traffic on surrounding streets.

Anticipated peak hour queues from the signal at Meyers Way S./Olson Pl. S.W. are not expected to block project driveways and traffic into and out of the site is not expected to create appreciable congestion.

The intersection of Meyers Way S./Olson Pl. S.W. currently functions at LOS B in the morning peak hour and LOS F in the p.m. peak hour. The evening traffic problem is analyzed to be caused by a high level of traffic exiting SR-509/First Ave. S. Bridge traffic headed for West Seattle. P.M. flows from the proposal site will be in the contra direction from the congestion and p.m. peak hour trips generated would not appreciably impact the congested intersection movements.

Although the traffic study does identify intersection improvements at Meyers Way S./Olson Pl. S.W. which could improve its level of service, there is no connection between the impacts of the proposal and the traffic flows which would be improved. Therefore, no SEPA conditioning of traffic impacts is warranted.

Parking

The traffic study indicates 130 peak hour trips both in the a.m. and p.m. peak hours. Eighteen parking spaces are to be provided and parking for 82 spaces on the adjacent Painter's Union site has been contracted for, which parking can be used during weekday hours when that facility is not in use for training purposes. Meyers Way is paved in such a way that cars can park on both sides along the project frontage. Currently, there is virtually no weekday parking demand on this street segment. It is possible that the religious facility across Meyers Way S. and just south from the proposal site generates on street parking when in a high level of use; on Sundays in particular. Another consideration in the parking equation is the possibility the JTF will need to be used on a weekend or other day when the Painter's Union site is also in use at a level that affords less than the promised 82 spaces. It is established that in most cases the JTF and the Painter's Union facility will operate in such a way as to allow for shared parking. Yet flexibility in parking supply would be greatly enhanced if a similar arrangement allowing shared spaces were put in effect on the property adjacent to the JTF to the south. This parcel, currently owned by the City through FFD, could be sold subject to such a shared parking arrangement. The City is interested in obtaining as high a price as possible for this parcel and, depending on for what purpose it is purchased, various arrangements regarding days, hours or even time of year may be necessary elements of the equation. Hence, FFD while being directed to seek a parking arrangement on the parcel to the south should be given flexibility in the matter.

Storm Water

Water runoff from the proposal site currently enters either the element of Hamm Creek on the site or, after passing through the detention pond it enters a drainage culvert along the Meyers Way S. street right-of-way to the east from whence it is culverted across the street and eventually into either Hamm Creek or other riparian corridors coursing to the Duwamish. Seattle Public Utilities has determined that stormwater handling capacity downstream from the subject site currently exceed capacities with resultant flooding. They have asked the proponents to design on-site stormwater detention to handle the 100 year event as prescribed in the Seattle Stormwater, Drainage and Grading Code. FFD has determined they are able to meet this 100 year event standard for detention and have agreed to do so. In order to avoid adverse environmental impacts due to excessive stream flows and flooding the project must be

conditioned through SEPA policy authority to require on-site detention sufficient to meet release rates proscribed in the Seattle Stormwater, Drainage and Grading Code in a 100 year storm event.

The project is designed to continue to channel clean water to Hamm Creek both from groundwater and from springs at the west edge of the site at rates very close to those currently experienced. Stormwater collected on site will be channeled through swales for bioremediation and then into an on-site detention pond before discharge at a controlled rate to a roadside drainage system along Meyers Way S. At times chlorinated water from the Seattle water system will be added to water drawn from the detention pond and used as part of training exercises on the site. During time spent in the bioswales and the detention pond this chlorine is expected to dissipate through dilution, evaporation and organic decomposition.

Street improvements proposed along the Meyers Way S. frontage include a sidewalk, street trees and a system of culverted swales and ponds. These will work to clean runoff from street and driveway surfaces and to moderate the flows of these waters downstream.

Ground Water

Extensive monitoring of groundwater flows on the site have been conducted. In the July 16, 2003 Technical Memorandum from PacRim Geotechnical, Inc. to Martha Turnbull it is concluded that a good hydraulic connection exists between Hamm Creek and groundwater in the area and that permanent ground dewatering necessary for structures on the site will not impact groundwater flows into the creek. In particular the memo concludes that maintaining a finish floor elevation of the Classroom/Training Building to elevation 241 and of the dewatering drain invert elevation to 238 and maintaining the dewatering drain invert elevations in the Trench Digging Prop area above elevation 238 to 239 will protect groundwater flows to Hamm Creek. The project is therefore conditioned to require these measures.

Noise

A Site Noise Report: Analysis and Recommendations, dated January 20, 2003, was prepared by BRC Acoustics and is included among the environmental documents in the DPD project file. In preparation of the report empirical data were collected from SFD apparatus and of on-site characteristics. Equipment used by SPU and SDOT are expected to be within the noise levels generated by the SFD equipment. The Seattle Noise Ordinance sets a daytime noise limit at adjacent residential receptors of 57 dBA. Two operational scenarios were studied; one with two apparatus in operation and with training noise generating activities underway, another with all identified noise sources combined but with each source in operation less than 100% of the time.

The Report concludes predicted average noise levels for the project will be slightly below allowable noise levels by (2 to 5 dBA), but will nevertheless be noticeable, and may, in unanticipated or unusual circumstances, slightly exceed City of Seattle noise limits.

In order to minimize noise impacts on surrounding properties the Noise Report recommends four actions to mitigate operations of the JTF, all four of which will be imposed as SEPA based conditions.

- Reduce the percentage use, as much as possible, for the noisiest equipment and activities and schedule these as much as possible away from early morning and late afternoon/early evening hours.

- Orient noise sources and locate noise sources to the east whenever and wherever possible.

- Provide high quality mufflers to reduce noise from portable hand equipment, including portable chain saws, portable pressurization fans (for smoke evacuation), and high-impact and small gas engine powered portable equipment.

- Maximize the number of east oriented openings in the High Drill Tower. Enclose the woodworking shed with overhead or coiling operable doors. Consider retrofitting SFD apparatus horns with quieter warning horns (consider 90 dBA at 25 feet rather than the current 97 dBA at 25 feet).

Plant and Animal Habitat

In the ten plus years since mining ended and it was graded to the current condition, trees and aquatic plants have established themselves and, in combination with the pond and water courses, there is now a good deal of wildlife habitat on the proposal site. Birds, in particular, have been observed to be flourishing. No threatened or endangered species are known to rely on the site and none are identified on the Priority Habitats and Species Report of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, December 19, 2002, included in the project file. Hamm Creek is described as impassable to fish 200 yards downstream from the proposal site due to a very large fall from a culvert.

While the existing wildlife habitat will be disturbed during the construction period, great effort has been made to design aquatic habitat back into the project. The Hamm Creek element on the site will be protected in its code mandated 50 foot buffer and its levels water flow will also be protected. Redesigned detention pond and drainage swales will be incorporated into the JTF project. Wildlife habitat will, upon completion of the project, be reduced from its current extent, but, it will, nevertheless, be an example of project development which incorporates wildlife habitat. No SEPA conditioning based upon Plant and Animal policies is warranted.

Other Impacts

Several adopted Codes and Ordinances and other Agencies will appropriately mitigate the other use-related adverse impacts created by the proposal. Specifically, these are the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (increased airborne emissions); and the Seattle Energy Code (long-term energy consumption).

The other impacts not noted here as mitigated by codes, ordinances, or conditions (increased pedestrian traffic; increased demand on public services and utilities) are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by conditions.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS - SEPA

During Construction

1. Existing flows into the Hamm Creek segment on the site shall be uninterrupted and unchanged in quantity from current levels.

For the Life of the Project

2. Classroom finish floor elevation at or above elevation 241 with dewatering drain invert elevation at or above 238 and dewatering drain invert elevation 238 in the Trench Digging Prop Area.

3. Minimize the use of the noisiest equipment and activities and schedule their use away from early morning and late afternoon/early evening hours.

4. Orient noise sources and locate noise sources as far to the east as reasonably possible.

5. Provide high quality mufflers to reduce noise from portable hand equipment, including portable chain saws, portable pressurization fans (for smoke evacuation), and high-impact and small gas engine powered portable equipment.

6. Orient openings in the High Drill Tower towards the east to the greatest extent possible. Enclose the woodworking shed with overhead or coiling operable doors. Consider retrofitting SFD apparatus horns with quieter warning horns (90 dBA at 25 feet rather than the current 97 dBA at 25 feet).

Signature: (signature on file) Date: March 29, 2004
Scott Kemp Senior Land Use Planner
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